



School District of Osceola

Mark Luebker, District Administrator

P. O. Box 128
331 Middle School Drive
Osceola, WI 54020
715-294-4140
FAX: 715-294-2428

Board of Education

Timm Johnson, President
Craig Brundlik, Vice President
Rosanne Anderson, Treasurer
Pete Kammerud, Clerk
Keri Uzpen, Director

October 23, 2013

Dear Wisconsin State Legislators,

The School District of Osceola seeks your support in maintaining Wisconsin's commitment to the Common Core State Standards. We have invested a great deal of resources into implementing these standards. If the state decides to shift to a new set of expectations, our significant local investment would be lost and we would struggle to find additional resources to reinvest to replicate this work. The Common Core is the newest component in our strong educational tradition in Osceola. Our schools need time to meet the challenge that has been set before them. We value the efforts that have been put forth by our students and our talented, dedicated staff and are excited about the possibilities in the future.

The Common Core State Standards offer us the opportunity to clearly define the knowledge and skills that will prepare our students to be college and career ready. These standards focus on rigorous proficiencies that dramatically raise the expectations of what Wisconsin students are expected to know and be able to do. It is estimated that Wisconsin experienced one of the highest jumps in rigor from old to new standards when we adopted the Common Core. These standards establish what students need to learn, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Our local schools and professional staff will continue to decide how best to help students meet these standards. The School District of Osceola supports the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and this new level of expected achievement.

Three years ago the Osceola Schools made the local decision to align our curriculum improvement efforts around the best practices of the day. We strongly believed that the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in isolation from our other initiatives would show minimal effects. A tremendous commitment of time, money, and human resources has gone into implementing the new standards in our schools. We embraced the framework of working as a professional learning community, revised our school calendar to provide the time needed for curriculum writing and creating common assessments, increased reading and math time in our middle school, and revamped our high school English Language Arts course offerings. We invested in professional development for our staff involving instructional strategies, assessment, and new materials. We asked our teachers to not only

**Home of the
Chieftains**

Osceola High School – 1111 Oak Ridge Drive – 715-294-2127
Osceola Middle School – 1029 Oak Ridge Drive – 715-294-4180
Osceola Intermediate School – 949 Education Avenue – 715-294-2800
Osceola Elementary School – 250 Tenth Avenue East – 715-294-3457
Transportation – 501 Simmon Drive – 715-294-3456

www.osceola.k12.wi.us



The School District of Osceola does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicap.

change the materials they were using but to also embrace new instructional practices and classroom management styles. We have already seen a dramatic increase in our local assessment scores. Our teachers feel confident in their abilities to bring about the necessary change that needs to happen with this reform initiative. To guarantee long-term success, school policies and practices – from professional development to the school master schedule to materials selection – must reflect the main effort of ensuring that each child is engaged, supported, and challenged to transition to this new level of expectations.

In our district, the Common Core State Standards have refocused our efforts on continuous improvement in all subjects and grade levels, not just in English language arts and math. It is essential that teachers effectively provide challenging, comprehensive curriculum across all content for college and career readiness. Following the State of Wisconsin's lead, we have focused on disciplinary literacy in grades 6-12, working to increase the rigor of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all secondary level content areas. The Common Core's emphasis on increasing these skills has bolstered our local efforts and provided opportunities for across discipline planning and collaboration.

Districts must establish structures for professional learning that foster progress toward more effective teaching practices based on deeper understanding of the learning process. We have found that the standards have provided momentum for our professional learning communities, further engaging our educators in conversations about teaching and learning, identifying best practices through instructional rounds, and increasing opportunities for instructional coaching. This kind of collaborative environment has also helped us recognize the need for a thoughtful and balanced approach to assessment, providing reliable, developmentally appropriate information on student achievement. Data driven instruction and a renewed interest in unified grading practices continues to push our district forward.

The Common Core Standards are challenging Osceola students to learn at higher levels in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. These rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards offer the possibility of shared expectations within Wisconsin and across the nation by providing a clear, logical progression of skills as a student moves from grade level to grade level. If effectively implemented, the new standards should reduce inequalities in curriculum and content instruction from district to district. Autonomy of local schools and teachers isn't reduced with these standards – our local districts can now focus on how these standards should be implemented, enabling teachers to deepen their teaching and devising the most effective ways for helping students learn. Teachers will continue to creatively devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms. Our challenge will be in working together to bring our new standards to life in all classrooms, by supporting all teachers, and engaging all students in ways that help them achieve these new educational goals.

Respectfully,

Jane Maki
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
School District of Osceola
makij@osceola.k12.wi.us

